



**ARTS**  
UNITED

# ARTS UNITED AWARDS CELEBRATION

## NOMINEES 2019

### MARGARET ANN KEEGAN AWARD

#### **STEPHANIE CARLSON** *(nominated by Rachelle Reinking)*

Stephanie Carlson spent twelve years working in the Tucson Unified School District as a teaching artist for the Opening Minds through the Arts (OMA) program, a nationally recognized, student achievement program that integrates the arts with the tested core curriculum of Language Arts, Social Studies, Math and Science. As the Director of Development and Education at Heartland Sings, she created an Arts Integrated Residency that is currently serving 1st grade students at Washington Elementary School and Adams Elementary in Fort Wayne Community Schools and Southwick Elementary School in East Allen County Schools.

#### **ANN GORDON** *(nominated by FAME)*

Ann Gordon has taught for Northwest Allen County Schools for the past 18 years and been a FAME board member for approximately 12 years with the last three as board president. Her students participate in FAME every year, and many have won awards for their art including: Mayor's Choice, Sister Cities, as well as eight FAME poster winners.

#### **GLORIA MINNICH** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Dance Collective)*

Gloria Minnich serves as an outreach instructor for the Fort Wayne Dance Collective, working with both neurotypical students and students with mild and profound disabilities ranging in age from three to senior citizens. Gloria has trained in the Hunter Heartbeat Method, which uses the language of Shakespeare to help those on the autism spectrum break through barriers and express themselves.

#### **CHRISTOPHER MURPHY** *(nominated by Gregory Stieber)*

Christopher Murphy is the Assistant Director of the Fort Wayne Youtheatre, where he teaches youth classes in Creative Drama, Advanced Drama and Improv, supervises all Youtheatre classes and camps, and brings creative drama lessons and workshops for pre-school through middle school students into underserved areas of our community. He also directs the annual holiday and Fairy Tale Fest productions and the Storybook Theatre troupe, which takes young actors to perform at libraries, hospitals, youth centers, and schools throughout Northeast Indiana and northwest Ohio.

#### **LEAH STUPECK** *(nominated by Tessa Leins)*

Leah Stupeck is a dance instructor and owner of Ratio Dance in Auburn and Fort Wayne, Indiana. Leah danced professionally in New York City, moved back to the Fort Wayne area, and has been teaching dance for the last 18 years. She has been a part of the education of Fort Wayne area dancers at Northeast School of Dance, Dance NY Style, Steppin' Out Studio of Dance, Community Arts Academy at PFW, Homestead High School, Turning Pointe Dance Academy, and now Ratio Dance.



## EMERGING ARTIST

### **ASHLEY BENNINGHOFF** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Dance Collective)*

Ashley Benninghoff is the Artistic Manager at Fort Wayne Dance Collective, co-director and member of the FWDC Touring Company, and Artistic Director of their youth performing group, Pineapple Dance Project. This group annually performs at Festival of Trees, Open Streets, Parkview Hospitals, and all FWDC productions. She also teaches and choreographs for their outreach programming at Fort Wayne Community Schools, East Allen County Schools, YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne, and FWDC on-site classes.

### **LEE POWERS** *(nominated by Unity Performing Arts Foundation)*

Lee Powers began working at Unity Performing Arts Foundation as the first full-time Graphic Designer at UPAF in 2015 and has since taken on the role of Multimedia Coordinator. Lee also creates handlettering pieces in her spare time as Lee Morgan Designs, including drinkware, makeup bags, stationery, art prints, and other home decor items sold at many pop up shops around Fort Wayne.

### **ANGELA SAHLI** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Civic Theatre)*

Angela Sahli has designed costumes for over sixty production for a variety of theatres including: the Northern Fort Playhouse, Highland Summer Theatre, Minnesota State University- Mankato, Northern State University, Cathedral High School, Great River Educational Arts Theatre, Weisser Park Elementary, and Fort Wayne Civic Theatre. Angela recently started her second season as the Costume Designer and Costume Shop Supervisor with the Civic Theatre.

### **JASON SWISHER** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Museum of Art)*

Jason Swisher is a multidisciplinary graphic artist and photographer and currently operates his own commercial arts business by day, Swish Design LLC, whose clients include Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Artlink, and many more. In 2015, Jason's talents were noticed by Nike and formalized with in-house project assignments in Shanghai, China, working directly with their brand team to develop Nike's customer experience and the annual Shanghai Marathon. In 2018, he unveiled a collaborative photography exhibition at Artlink documenting his experiences as a first-time traveler to this distant country.

### **VIOLETTA TODOROVA** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Philharmonic)*

Violetta Todorova is a concertmaster at the Fort Wayne Philharmonic and serves in Club Orchestra, alongside two other members of the orchestra. Together, they have created and implemented curriculum for elementary strings students grades through 3-5. She also teaches violin at Taylor University and gives solo performances in Fort Wayne and other cities.

## EMERGING LEADER



### **ADRIAN CURRY** *(nominated by 90+ individuals and organizations)*

Adrian Curry has been teaching step and dance for 15 years at Weisser Park Youth Center. He is the director and creator of The Art Leadership Center (ALC), with over 30 students who have stepped at various community events in Fort Wayne. His background in neuroscience has helped him create the Arts Leadership Center into a lab and lecture style curriculum through the arts.

### **STEPHANIE FISHER** *(nominated by Craig Nix)*

Stephanie Fisher is a writer who founded the Fort Wayne Writers Guild in 2015. This grassroots organization focuses on helping writer to improve their craft, and with Stephanie's lead, has now created a number of sessions and meetups geared towards writers. The Guild now is in partnership with other community and writing groups, including the Allen County Public Library, to produce a calendar that includes writers' gatherings.

### **AARON SAMRA** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Philharmonic)*

Aaron Samra joined the Philharmonic last year as Program Manager of Club Orchestra, a collaborative El Sistema violin program with Fort Wayne Community Schools. He has helped to transform this from a small after school program to weekly club engaging over 100 students. His background is in music education and directing, and he is a former FWCS teacher.

### **EMILY SCHWARTZ KEIRNS** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Civic Theatre)*

Emily Schwartz Keirns became a Leadership Fort Wayne board intern with Fort Wayne Civic Theatre in 2012 and is now in her sixth year on the board. She has chaired the board development and fundraiser committees and currently serves as board secretary and on the artistic committee.

### **NICK TASH** *(nominated by Paige Matteson)*

Nick Tash serves as the Artistic Director of Shakespearemachine. As he developed an interest in mask performance, Shakespeare, and the art of puppetry, he combined his passions, and created Shakespearemachine. Nick has performed both professionally and at several community theatres in the Fort Wayne area.



## OUTSTANDING ADVOCATE

### **AUER FOUNDATION** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Philharmonic)*

The Auer Foundation is a private foundation, serving the Fort Wayne/Allen County area, with a focus on lone Auer's passions - arts, education, and parks. Through granting, Auer Foundation has supported many types of activities, including the underwriting of Fort Wayne Philharmonic and Fort Wayne Community Schools' Club Orchestra program.

### **ALEXANDRA HALL** *(nominated by Artlink)*

Alexandra Hall has been working as a full-time artist since 2014. She partnered with the Downtown Improvement District to build a comprehensive public art program, Art This Way, to bring alleyway activation to Downtown Fort Wayne through the installation of public art.

### **JOHN O'CONNELL** *(nominated by Embassy Theatre)*

John O'Connell is Dean of the Purdue University Fort Wayne College of Visual and Performing Arts. John served as Chair of the IPFW Department of Theatre and currently maintains an active professional stage directing career, freelancing at professional theatres around the country. He has directed Fort Wayne Civic Theatre, First Presbyterian Theatre, and Fort Wayne Youtheatre.

## OUTSTANDING ARTIST



### **DIANE GABY** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Dance Collective)*

Diane Gaby is a freelance artist who has worked in commercial, not-for-profit, and private sectors. She is Technical Director and Lighting Designer for the Fort Wayne Dance Collective and a member of their Parkview Healing Arts team, Assistant Director of the University of Saint Francis School of Creative Arts Jesters, and conducts private art sessions for those referred by a local therapist.

### **COREY LEE** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Civic Theatre)*

Corey Lee is the Technical Director/Lighting Designer for the Fort Wayne Civic Theatre. Corey also has been a lighting designer for Mikautadze Dance Theatre since 2013, was the technical director and lighting designer for Fort Wayne Summer Music Theatre, and has worked with the Fort Wayne Youtheatre, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Weisser Park Elementary School, Arena Dinner Theatre, Embassy Theatre, Manchester University, Shakespearemachine, Fort Wayne Ballet, dAnce Kontemporary, Bishop Dwenger High School, and Northrop High School.

### **TIM PARSLEY** *(nominated by Artlink)*

Tim Parsley is Chair of the Art Department and Associate Professor of Studio Art at the University of Saint Francis School of Creative Arts in Fort Wayne, IN. Tim He also works as a public artist and public art educator, creating numerous, large-scale, publicly-supported mural projects, including the nearly 6000 square foot mural of an American bison at The Landing in downtown Fort Wayne entitled, "This Land Was Made for You and Me." Tim currently serves as a member of the newly-established Fort Wayne Public Art Commission.

### **ORION RAPP** *(nominated by Caleb Young)*

Orion Rapp, as Principal Oboist of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic since 2013, is regularly featured as a soloist on a variety of programs, which continually showcases his breadth of musical knowledge and performance diversity. He also serves as Principal Oboist of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, regularly performs with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and has been a guest artist with the San Diego Symphony and the East Coast Chamber Orchestra.



## OUTSTANDING COLLABORATION

### **ART THIS WAY** *(nominated by Downtown Improvement District)*

Art This Way is a public art program operating under the umbrella of the Fort Wayne Downtown Improvement District. The two organizations work together to orchestrate the installation of public art on private properties in downtown Fort Wayne. In 2018 Art This Way installed four large murals, which have brought visitors, tourists and photographers into Fort Wayne's alleyway network.

### **CLUB ORCHESTRA WITH FWCS** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Philharmonic)*

Club Orchestra is a partnership with FWCS and the Fort Wayne Philharmonic. Club O provides an intensive orchestra training program that teaches the importance of teamwork, promotes self-confidence, and instills the value of social responsibility through violin instruction to students grades 3-5 who otherwise could not afford music instruction, led by schools' general Music Teachers and Philharmonic musicians..

### **FAME'S CELEBRATION OF YOUTH CONCERT** *(nominated by FAME)*

FAME's Celebration of Youth Concert is a collaboration performance between Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Fort Wayne Ballet, and Fort Wayne Children's Choir. Children create their own compositions with the help of composer David Crowe, which are then paired with choreography of the Fort Wayne Ballet. At the annual FAME Festival, these student compositions are performed live with dancers and musicians.

### **SHAKESPEAREMACHINE** *(nominated by Josey McBride)*

Shakespearemachine is a theatre collective dedicated to exploring the complete works of William Shakespeare and his contemporaries through the use of masks and unusual audience-performer relationships. Known for collaborating with individual local artists, they are a company in residence with Purdue University Fort Wayne.

### **A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN AND**

### **ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Civic Theatre)*

A Tribute to the Music of Rodgers & Hammerstein and Andrew Lloyd Webber, a concert held April 20-21, 2018 was a collaboration between the Fort Wayne Philharmonic and the Fort Wayne Civic Theatre as a 90th Anniversary Celebration Concert at the Historic Embassy Theatre. This was the first collaboration for these two arts groups in 26 years that featured Fort Wayne Civic Theatre alumni Manna Nichols and Christopher Sloan singing classic songs from Rogers and Hammerstein and Andrew Lloyd Webber and accompaniment by the Fort Wayne Philharmonic.

# OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER



## **SUSAN CAVANAUGH** *(nominated by Embassy Theatre)*

Susan Cavanaugh has been a volunteer at the Embassy for five years, assisting patrons during evening events and helping with the morning Kids Study Program. In the 2017-18 season, she logged 240 hours of volunteer work. She also volunteers with Kate's Kart at the Dupont Hospital location and at the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory during the butterfly exhibit.

## **HEATHER CLOSSON** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Dance Collective)*

Heather Closson is a choreographer, performer, and dance educator who has choreographed for over thirty productions throughout the state of Indiana. She has performed, worked, and volunteered with several Fort Wayne nonprofit organizations centered around the arts and youth education, including: Fort Wayne Youtheatre, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Fort Wayne Dance Collective, Project READS, FAME, Middle Waves, and Science Central. Heather currently serves as the Grants & Program Manager at Arts United and is an instructor at Ratio Dance.

## **SHARON FALLON** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Civic Theatre)*

Sharon Fallon worked several years as a librarian at the Indianapolis Public Library and as a middle school librarian for over twenty years. After retiring, she began to give back to the community in a way as a volunteer in scenic building for the Fort Wayne Civic Theatre and has been helping to paint since.

## **SUSAN JOHNSON** *(nominated by Fort Wayne Youtheatre)*

Susan Johnson became connected to the community by starting Fort Wayne Museum of Art's first hands-on children's program. She then became further involved with the museum and served on the Capital Campaign committee that raised the funds to the museum from West Central to their present location at Arts Campus Fort Wayne.

## **SHAWNA NICELLEY** *(nominated by ARCH)*

Shawna Nicelley serves on the ARCH Board of Directors and as Audience Development Committee Chair, which takes responsibility for events and programming, working closely with ARCH staff. Shawna led ARCH to a sold-out June Historic Home & Garden Tour, enabling both ARCH and Illsley Place Neighborhood Association to raise much-needed funds. She and her committee created the Dearly Departed program as ARCH's contribution to the Three Rivers Festival.

## **JULIE WALL** *(nominated by Artlink)*

Julie Wall is an artist who owns and operates The HEDGE, assisting in many locally driven arts events. Julie has served on the YMCA child care board, Fort Wayne Central Lion's Club, and Artlink's educational outreach and currently sits on the artist panel and board of directors at Artlink and Wunderkammer Company's education committee.



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## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

### LYNNE GILMORE

Lynne Gilmore recently retired as Chief Program Officer of AWS Foundation, overseeing all grant making activities and programs that advanced the Foundation's mission. Lynne's 20-year career in the disability field, paired with her value for the arts, provided Lynne perspective and insight into the role the AWS Foundation could play as an advocate for the disability community, as well as ensuring full and equal access to the things that impact quality of life - including the arts.

Lynne has consistently and persistently sought to integrate arts experiences into the lives of people of all abilities. It all began with Bike Art with Purpose when she launched the first semi-permanent public art project in 2014 in collaboration with (then) IPFW's 50th anniversary celebration Sculpture with Purpose, sculptures functioning as bike racks, as a way to include the disability community in this otherwise huge community-wide celebration. Collaborating with 25 disability service providers and special education classrooms for a total of 500 participants, they transformed impounded, broken bicycles and parts into whimsical, thoughtful-provoking works of art. This project inspired our area arts organizations to become more inclusive. In the following years, Wunderkammer and First Presbyterian's Gallery hosted exhibitions by more than 150 artists identified through the bike art project. SOpening night attendance at a both shows broke all records and art sales were brisk. Following that, she added an art show and sale at the annual disAbility Expo at the Coliseum.

Her leadership in advocating for inclusive arts programming has helped to inspire performance programs such as "Project Lights Up!", sensory friendly performances by the Civic Theatre designed for people on the autism spectrum and others with varying abilities that might keep them from participating in a traditional theatre setting. The Fort Wayne Ballet performed its first sensory friendly performance of The Nutcracker this year based on the same model. Youtheatre developed the Backstage Insight and outreach programs explaining the elements of the play, actors and costuming to understand the performances and give youngsters a chance to learn about acting. And Artlink held an inclusive Spring Break art camp bringing together youngsters with and without disabilities to learn about and appreciate one other's worlds artistically.

Lynne's encouragement led to two extraordinary musical experiences. Audiences Unlimited partnered with LIFE Adult Day Academy to create the Music Enrichment program to serve adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Participants in the program engaged in interactive, participatory music programs during their social hour. The program culminated in a packed-house performance in the Parkview Physician's Group ArtsLab. Heartland Sings initiated a summer vocal music program for children in Turnstone's early learning center that not only brought joy to their day but also developed new skills and focus.

Working with visual artist Dwayne Szot of Zot Artz, in 2015 Lynne led the community to provide an adaptive art workshop and the opportunity for children with mobility challenges to utilize a "painting wheelchair" and other adaptive painting technics to create a large scale Community Canvas in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

A graduate of Albion College, Lynne's career reflects her liberal arts education with experience in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, with the majority of her work in higher education, health care, human services and the arts. Lynne was born and raised in South Bend, but her work has taken her to Minneapolis, New York, Baltimore and Chicago before moving to Fort Wayne in 1994. Active in the community, her volunteerism includes service organizations, the arts, women's heart health, homelessness and church. Lynne's work has helped bring awareness of the needs of people of all abilities. It has also brought awareness of the value that rich artistic experiences bring to the quality of life for all people.

# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



## JULIA MEEK

Julia Meek is a radio host, visual artist, and community volunteer, who has contributed to our creative community for fifty years. She is currently co-producer and host of Folktales, co-coordinator and host of Meet the Music on Northeast Indiana Public Radio, and through her various roles, has been a well-loved voice for Arts & Culture in Northeast Indiana for many years.

A Fort Wayne native, Julia's connection with her community began with various student art projects, and volunteer days at Miss Virginia's (Food Pantry) while she was still in high school, and has been gaining momentum ever since. This included a passion for local and regional history that led to extensive field research of the Wabash and Erie Canal through the late 1970's and 1980's, and co-founding the Canal Society of Indiana.

She started at what is now WBOI in 1981 when a "Save Our Station" drive prompted her to volunteer there. The station, which had been based at the IPFW campus, was transitioning to a self-supporting, community-based station with the call letters WBNI.

By 1982, Julia was hosting the evening drive-time classical music show, "Serenades," on Thursdays. A lover of all types of music, she used the last half hour of her time slot to play all genres of music, including one of her favorites, folk music. Her love of folk music made Julia the perfect choice to create and host a new weekly program in the mid-1980's called "Folktales". Through "Folktales" Julia has introduced many diverse artists and new genres of music to people across Northeast Indiana and beyond. "Folktales" has been available to other public radio stations as a syndicated show since 2012. It airs on stations around Indiana and the United States, especially her seasonal specials. The shows also are available internationally via web streaming.

About eight years ago, Julia also launched a second show on WBOI, "Meet the Music." The program features the great music of our region, giving local bands and musicians a chance to tell their own stories, and record a sampling of their music in the NIPR studios. It has also become a "drop in" destination for national and occasionally international touring acts. One of the highlights of the annual Taste of the Arts Festival includes Julia presenting a live "Meet the Music" Kickoff Concert.

As a visual artist, Julia is perhaps initially remembered for her impressionist line drawings and water colors depicting familiar local landmarks and history. Her portraits include Baker Street train station, the Lincoln Tower, Wolf & Dessauer, and the McCulloch Park bandstand. Julia also created the large mural of Fort Wayne on the south side of the building next to Hyde Brothers Booksellers on Wells Street.

In these and so many ways Julia has enthusiastically promoted the arts, supported the work of local artists and musicians, and provided a gracious on-air voice for the "Artcentric" community of Fort Wayne.

## HECTOR GARCIA

Fort Wayne sculptor, Hector Garcia, has established a reputation over the past 50 years, on regional, national, and international levels. As an IPFW Associate Professor Emeritus of Fine Arts, Garcia taught sculpture and figure drawing at the University from 1976 to 1997. He first taught with the Fort Wayne Art Institute, followed by IPFW after the merger with Indiana University. A nationally and internationally recognized sculptor, Garcia received a B.F.A. in sculpture from The John Herron Institute in Indianapolis and an M.F.A. from Indiana University. He also completed special scholarship work at the Instituto Allende in Mexico.

Garcia has completed hundreds of sculptures and commissioned works during his prolific career. He has produced medals and medallions for award ceremonies in Helsinki, Finland; Takaoka, Japan; Gera, Germany; Plosk, Poland. Hector also produced a medal commemorating the Bi-Centennial of the London Philharmonic. As a dedicated cyclist, Hector was honored to be commissioned by Velo News to design an award presented to outstanding cyclists internationally, including winners of the Tour de France. Collections of his work are owned by notable individuals throughout the country including Ted Turner, Ray Bradbury, Herbie Hancock, Chris Schenkel, Bob Knight, Gene Keady, Richard Lugar, and Lance Armstrong.

As a faculty member of the Fort Wayne Art School, in 1967 Garcia created a series of life-sized busts of the leading figures in literature, art, and the sciences for the new Allen County Public Library. Two of his outdoor works, "The Jesuit," and "Chief Little Turtle" were added to our own public art scene in 1976. The United States Bicentennial celebration in 1976 heralded the beginning of the modern era of public art in Fort Wayne, and across the country. Two major pieces were completed by Garcia as part of the city's commemoration. "The Jesuit", in bronze, is located at the confluence of the rivers, on the grounds of the Water Filtration Facility. During the same year, Garcia completed his statue "Chief Little Turtle", also bronze, which was installed at the entrance of the Old Fort Wayne. After the daily operations of the fort were discontinued, Little Turtle was moved to its current location across the river in Headwaters Park.

Hector Garcia continues to be active today, recently dedicating a bronze sculpture "The Good Shepherd" to The Rescue Mission. In addition, Hector's sculptural art work, "Thespian Angel Ascending," hangs on a lobby wall in the Louis Kahn designed Arts United Center.